

until 1963, however, that the idea was first taken up by a national leader from within the area itself, namely Kekkonen. At that time the Finnish President, noting that the Nordic states already constituted a *de facto* NWFZ, simply called for “confirming this through mutual undertakings,” to “significantly consolidate their own position and remove them unequivocally from the sphere of speculation caused by the development of nuclear strategy.”⁴ Although Kekkonen insisted that such an “act” would not require a change in the existing policies of the states in question, his use of the word “unequivocally,” in describing the aim of his initiative, betrayed the fact that the then-current Nordic abstentions from nuclear weapons were indeed equivocal. For example, NATO members Norway and Denmark had both refused to rule out the deployment of nuclear weapons on their respective territories in the event of crisis or war, maintaining that their self-imposed ban on the stationing of allied nuclear forces applied to normal peacetime circumstances only.

From the very beginning, Norway and Denmark had inquired of Premier Bulganin whether he was prepared to include the northern part of the Soviet Union within the proposed zone.⁵ The same theme was taken up by the Swedish Foreign Minister in response to the Khrushchev initiative of 1959.⁶ The Soviet leader’s reply at the time was that such an idea was “illogical” and “made no practical sense,” since “with present-day weapons a difference in range of from 300 to 500 kilometres made no difference.”⁷ Nevertheless, the Soviets did offer an early version of a negative security guarantee — “a pledge to treat the territory of those countries as being outside the sphere of action of rocket and nuclear weapons, and to respect the status quo in

4. “Finns’ Plea for Nuclear-Free Zone,” *Times*, London, 29 May 1963, p. 10; and “Kekkonen Renews Plea for Atom Ban,” *New York Times* (NYT), 29 May 1963, p. 6.

5. “Norway Ponders Reply to Moscow,” *NYT*, 13 January 1958, p. 4; and Niels J. Haagerup, “Nuclear Weapons and Danish Security Policy,” in: Johan Jørgen Holst (ed.), *Security, Order, and the Bomb*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1972, p. 39.

6. “Sweden Rejects Neutralizing of Baltic,” *Times*, London, 27 June 1959, p. 5.

7. “Khrushchev Plan for Wider Nuclear-Free Zone,” *Times*, 18 July 1959, p. 6; and A.M. Rosenthal, “Khrushchev Sees Scandinavia Risk,” *NYT*, 18 July 1959, p. 2.